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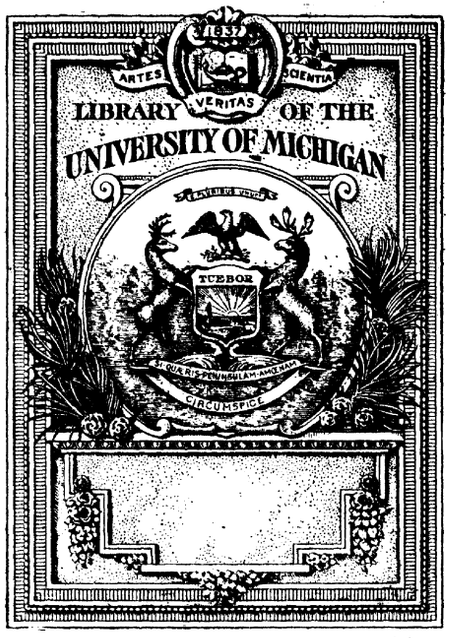

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE BERNICE PAUAHI BISHOP MUSEUM

OF

POLYNESIAN ETHNOLOGY

AND

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VOL. II — NO. 2.

Old Hawaiian Carvings.

HONOLULU, H. I.:
BISHOP MUSEUM PRESS.
1906.

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Old Hawaiian Carvings found in 1905 secreted in a cave on Hawaii. Figured and described by WILLIAM T. BRIGHAM, Sc.D. (Columbia), *Director of the Bishop Museum.*

IN a cave on the western portion of Hawaii, of which the main opening was not concealed, a number of human remains were deposited, some of great antiquity, others certainly after the advent of the white men. So far there was nothing to distinguish this from scores of other burial caves, some abandoned, others still in use in the rural districts: all are bubbles or channels in ancient lava streams,—streams which have gradually built up the islands and are still occasionally poured forth from the active volcanoes of Hawaii. In recent years streams have flowed the same way as the ancient lava torrents which were used as burial caves, and the Bishop Museum contains articles snatched from these caves before the advancing flow.

To one familiar with these caves the vestibule, as it may be called, is the least interesting portion; it is a tunnel of varying size and irregular section, often shrinking to a passage hardly large enough to admit a man's body, then expanding into a hall of considerable height, and with numerous ramifications, some small as rat holes, others of a size to admit a horse. In the old and important caves these side passages are generally walled up, and originally this was done so effectually as to conceal the entrance, but earthquakes and time have loosened the dry stone wall, and it is now possible to detect it, unless the deposited and decaying bones cover it, and these one hesitates to disturb unnecessarily. Behind these walls lie the interests of the cave. One may pull down with great labor in the dark and ill ventilated cave the carefully placed wall and find in the chamber behind it perhaps nothing, perhaps a few crumbling bones or a decayed calabash.

Of three explorers of the cave around which centres the interest of this account, one had often explored such caves in search of water, and coming from a side chamber where was a corpse in a canoe raised on a stand with choice mats and kapa, he noticed a wall not far from the entrance to this burial chamber (Fig. 1). After much hard work a small opening was made and the recess entered. There were fragmentary human remains, but on one side of the chamber were the articles which are the subject of this paper wrapped carefully in kapa. What connection they have, if any, with the bones in the main cave, or those in the branch chamber I cannot say: perhaps they were simply hidden here as the safest place of deposit known,—in the guardianship of the

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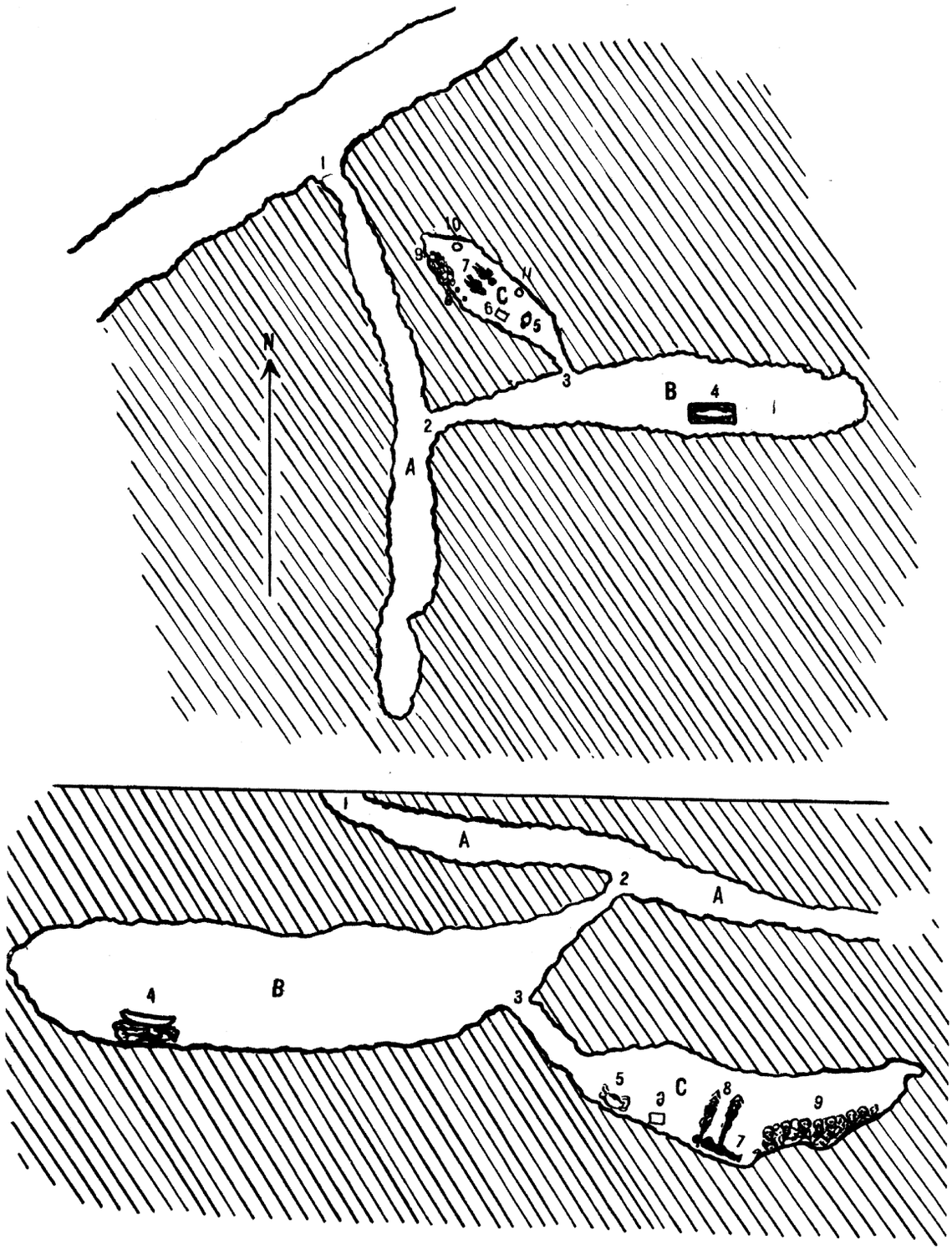

FIG. 1. SKETCH PLAN OF PART OF THE CAVE.

1. Opening to cave from gulch.
2. Branch opening to B, closed with rocks.
3. Branch opening to C, closed with rocks.
4. Canoe with skeleton, feet to east.
5. Wooden bowl with carved figure.
6. Papamu or konane board.
7. Two human figures, heads to east.
8. Two aumakuas leaning against wall.
9. Skulls and bones rolled in kapa.
10. Ipu aina with human teeth.
11. Large gourd containing skeleton of infant.

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dead. It has been suggested that they form the paraphernalia of a temple and were hidden, as so many of the idols were, at the time of the general destruction of the idols in 1819 in the hope that the storm would blow over and better times ensue, but there is absolutely nothing in the collection to support such a view. The two gods or *aumakua* were household deities, the other articles might be the private property of

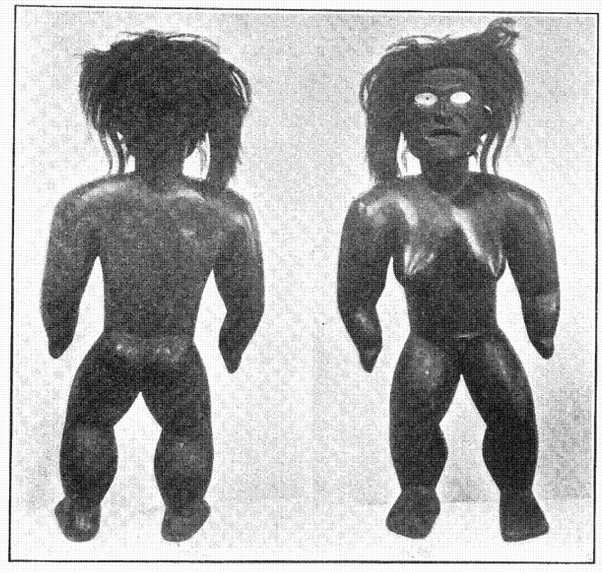

FIG. 2. FEMALE PORTRAIT STATUETTE.

some chief or priest, and two things,—the fan and bit of porcelain are such keepsakes as were commonly deposited with the dead to whom the articles had belonged.

The objects were carefully wrapped in kapa, but the explorers unfortunately removed all this without especially noting the kinds used on each, and we are deprived of any clew this disposition might afford. We have the letter but the addressed

The cave opening was about 30 feet above the bottom of a dry gulch running northeast and southwest. It was about 3 feet wide and the passage into which it led (A) was about 55 feet long. At about half the height a walled-up opening (2) was found leading to a narrow passage, 2 feet wide, soon opening into a chamber (B) approximately 10 feet high and wide with a length of 30 feet. This chamber (B) contained a human skeleton placed in a canoe and raised on a stand (4). As will be seen in the lower diagram this chamber is below the passage A. Another walled-up door (3) led to a passage about 2 feet wide and 7 feet long opening into a chamber (C) perhaps 20 feet long and 7 feet wide and high. In this last chamber were the articles here described.

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envelope was torn off. In passing it should be mentioned that the kapa was in fair preservation, some of the specimens being of very choice quality, such as was generally made only by women of high position.

First and most important in the find are two wooden statuettes, both female, perhaps mother and daughter, which I consider portraits,[1] and if this conjecture be

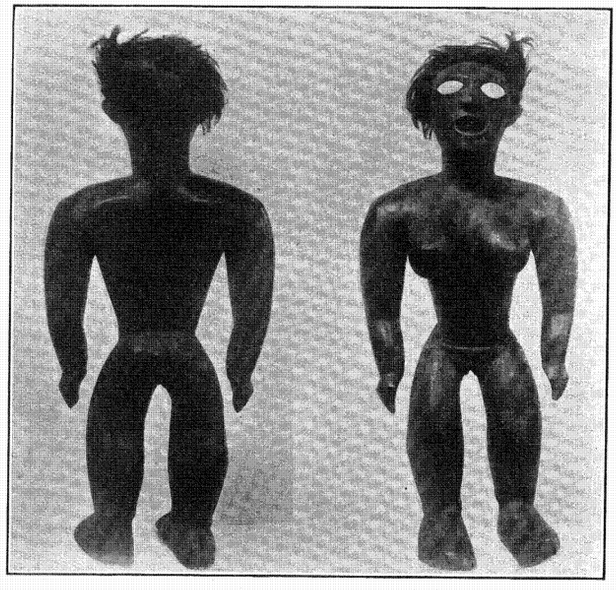
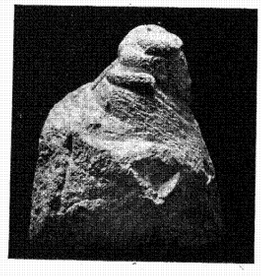


FIG. 3. PORTRAIT STATUETTE OF GIRL.

[1] I am not unmindful of the interesting stone figure already described and figured in the essay on Hawaiian Stone Implements (Mem., vol. i, 4, p. 95), but that, if not of foreign workmanship, was a portrait of a foreigner. All that is known of this curious bust is given in the essay referred to, but the illustrations may be repeated here to show the contrast to genuine native work.



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correct, they are the finest specimens known of Hawaiian portrait work. The measurements and description are as follow:—

1. Height 28 in.; breadth of shoulders 12.3 in. Dark wood well polished. Vulva carefully carved, breasts conical. Teeth of lower jaw inserted as one piece of

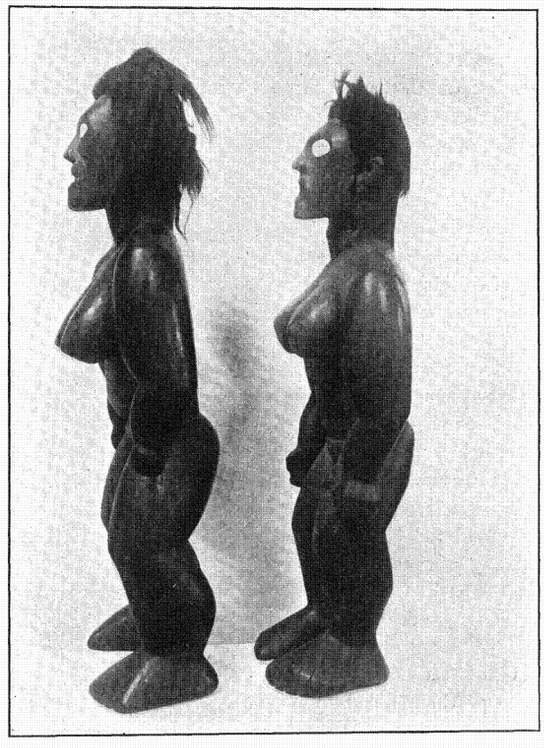

FIG. 4. STATUETTES IN PROFILE.

light colored wood. Hair neatly pegged in the usual way, reddish and very brittle. Eyes of shell, right with peg hole drilled, left entire and more recent.

2. Height 27 in.; breadth of shoulders 11.2 in. Hands and ears better finished than in No. 1. Breasts hemispherical. Vulva deep cut, with deeper hole. Mouth open with hole at bottom as if to attach tongue. Eyes pearl, without holes. Hair pegged in with some fibrous wood. Same wood and workmanship as No. 1.

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Beyond the limitation of insufficient tools and primitive methods there is a type seen in all Hawaiian sculpture which is strongly developed here. In addition there is a freedom and individuality in these little statues, which are doubtless from the same hand and of the same date, seldom seen in the images of the gods. The relative age of the two subjects is shown not only in the breasts but is most strongly marked in the facial features. The limbs are rendered much truer to nature than usual, with less of the elephantine form, fully separated, and the balance is so well preserved that the images stand firmly on their feet. When found each image had on an apron of kapa.

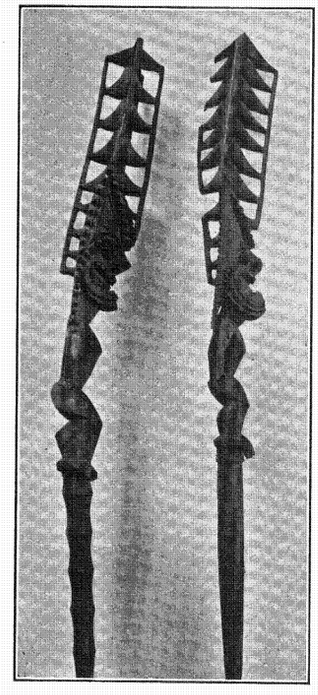

FIG. 5. SIDE VIEW OF AUMAKUA.

The hair, which in its unkempt state gives a wild though realistic effect to the figures, is the usual coarse hair of the Hawaiian, in these specimens of a reddish tint, whether from coral lime dyes or from decay I cannot say, but the hairs are certainly very brittle. The method of attachment to the head is that commonly used in Hawaiian figures, viz.: a hole, round or square, is made in the head; a lock of hair is bent in the middle and the bend inserted in the hole and driven home by a flat wedge which is finally cut to be flush with the general surface and the hairs are thus held securely without any cement. These holes are distinctly seen on the back of the head of the first figure where the hair seems to have broken off but not come out. The empty square holes are more plainly shown in the carved bowl (Fig. 7). The eyes are of flat pearl shell, large and held in place without cement. Only one has been drilled, although it was common, especially in the feather and wicker work heads, to drill a rather large hole through which a round head peg held the shell fast and served to give the expression of a pupil to the eye. The Maori made a similar eye of paua shell, but the central peg was usually an integral part of the head. The older woman has a block of artificial teeth inserted in her lower jaw, a curious deviation from the method used in many of the god images of inserting dog teeth. I have never seen human teeth used in this way, although in one idol in this Museum (No. 7658) there are cavities in the mouth larger than would be

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required for ordinary dog teeth. The younger woman has a hole drilled in the back of the mouth perhaps for attaching a tongue. The waist, especially in the younger woman, is contracted, and there is a curious ridge between the abdominal and pubic regions. This ridge is also shown in an image in the Museum (No. 7656) which may be a poor attempt at a portrait. In the Museum figure the hands are better wrought than in either of the female images here figured; the breasts are well modeled and show the large Hawaiian nipple. The calf of the leg is, however, affected with elephantiasis, and the balance is destroyed. The head is remarkably brachycephalic, the ears small and high, nose prominent and curved, mouth open and with thin lips, no signs of teeth or tongue. The eyes were of shell and the holes for the attaching pegs are neither central nor symmetrical. The holes for attaching the hair are of the rudest form, and while the hair is gone the pegs generally remain. Another anatomical feature seldom shown is the diaphragmatic line separating chest from abdomen. This image was for many years in the cabinet of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at Boston.

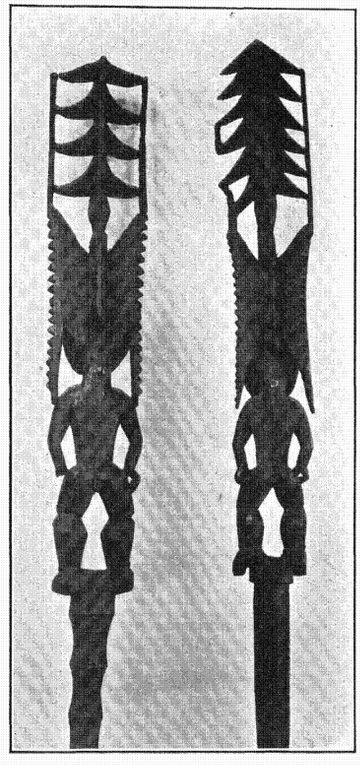

FIG. 6. BACK VIEW OF AUMAKUA.

I can hardly say why, but these two female figures remind me strongly of the old-fashioned figureheads of ships,[2] which, however, often had less expression than these, and it is quite possible that the native artist had lessons from some European or American sailor, for I should hardly place these carvings earlier than the early part of the nineteenth century, or possibly the last decade of the eighteenth.

At the time of the destruction of the idols, after the kapu was broken, many

[2] I have compared them with photographs I once took at Nantucket of a number of these figureheads, once the pride of shipowners, now discarded by a changing fashion, and while I cannot trace the least resemblance to individual figures, the impression remains.

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carved figures, mostly grotesque, were doubtless hidden by the devout priests from the mob violence that generally accompanies such changes; witness the terrible destruction of architectural statues, even tombs and painted glass in "civilized" countries during the reformation. But more important was the custom of depositing in some cache the especial property of a departed chief. Not by any means with his remains to which they might serve for identification, a thing to be most carefully avoided, as

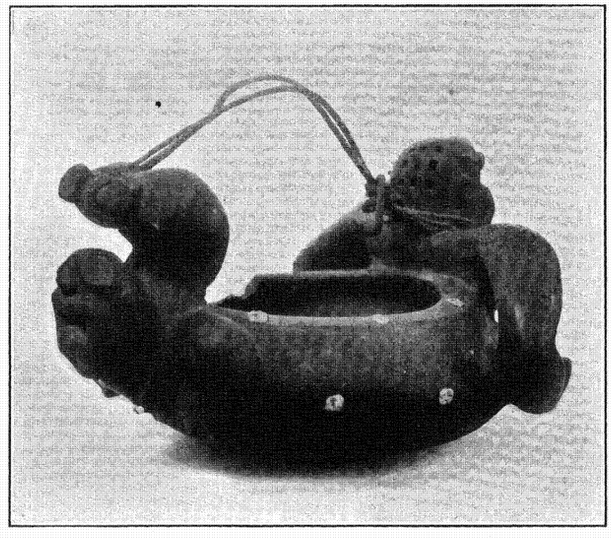

FIG. 7. CARVED BOWL.

we shall see below, but in some cave (*puoa*), possibly on another island from that which concealed his bones, such deposits being left in the care of a *kahu* who would generally appoint his successors, and while in the early days of the Christian mission on these islands, the converted kahu would perhaps bring an idol from its place of concealment to serve as offering to his new spiritual father and proof of the sincerity of his conversion,[3] generally the secret of the place of deposit was faithfully kept. I have known of several traditionary caves of which the entrance was carefully concealed, and although the kahu was known, nothing would induce him (or her) to disclose the secret.

[3]The war god of the great Kamehameha, Kukailimoku (Mus. No. 7855) figured in the essay on Hawaiian Feather Work, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 32, fig. 22, was thus given to the missionary, and it is probable that the image (Mus. No. 7656) was a similar offering.

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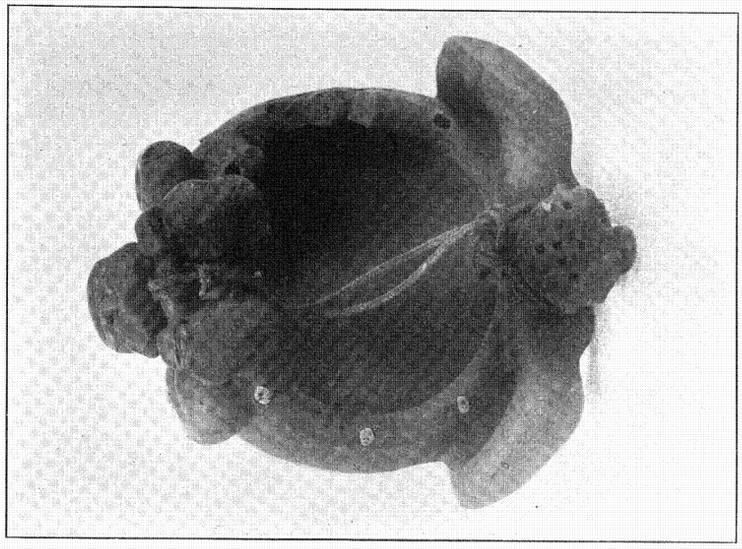

FIG. 8. INTERIOR OF CARVED BOWL.

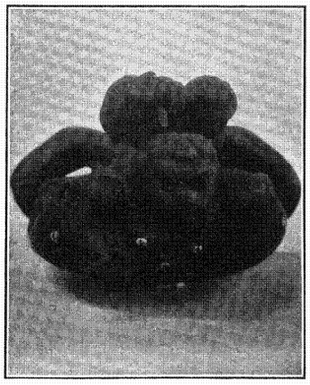

FIG. 9. ONE END OF CARVED BOWL.

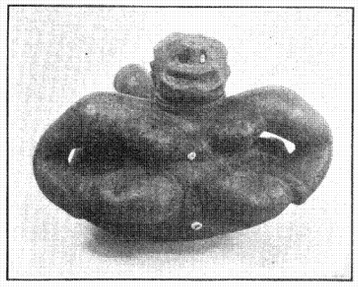

FIG. 10. OTHER END OF CARVED BOWL.

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The late king Kalakaua was especially anxious to learn of such deposits, and he once described his visit to a cave near Kealakeakua on Hawaii, where he had to dive to a hole in the cliff above the bay and then come up through a sort of well, and when torches were lighted he saw huge wicker figures of gods, a canoe and other things. He told me he would not enter that cave again for all the kingdoms of the Earth. At another time he persuaded a very old man, the kahu of a puoa on Kahoolawe, to show him the entrance. The old man knew that he should die as soon as he

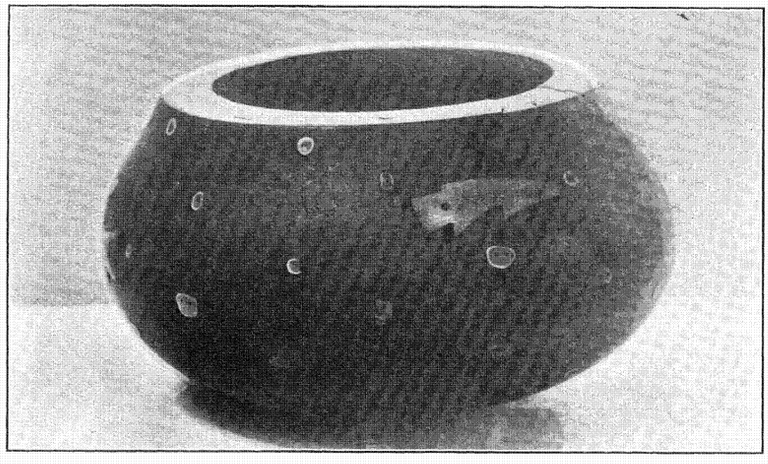

FIG. 11. INLAID IPU AINA.

parted with the secret, but he was old and weary of life and proud to die for his king. Kalakaua was very eager, but the kahu then told him that the man who opened it would die too. Not being weary of life, the king came to me and begged me to go and open the puoa for him. I asked if he was anxious to kill me: and he answered (in the general belief of his people) that the predicted fate had power only over Hawaiians. We went so far as to make an agreement as to the partition of the things that might be found, but the king's departure for the coast of California, where he died, put an end to the adventure, and the old kahu soon after died also.

Although many of the objects in the Bishop Museum came from such deposits, in very few cases is the locality known. As an illustration of the care exercised by the kahu over his hidden treasures, I may mention a cave in Kau discovered by accident. Late one afternoon while the road from Kilauea to Punaluu was being broken out, a cart

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crushed through into the cave beneath the roadway. It was found to contain many articles, but the day was so far spent when the workmen had extricated the cart and horses that they left further exploration for the next morning. They returned to work very early, but the cave was empty. Doubtless the kahu had removed the deposit from the opened cave to another in the neighborhood: caves are common enough in that region.

The Papa kupalupalu manu (two platters on which human flesh was used for shark bait) of Alapai nui (died 1754) were in a puoa in Puuanahulu, North Kona, Hawaii, when the lava flow of 1868-69 threatened their destruction. The cave was buried in the advancing stream, but the platters were removed to the house of the kahu in Kaupulehu where they were preserved until April 8, 1883, when the last of the kahu, an old woman, died. They were then sold and came to the Museum, where they bear the numbers 157-158.

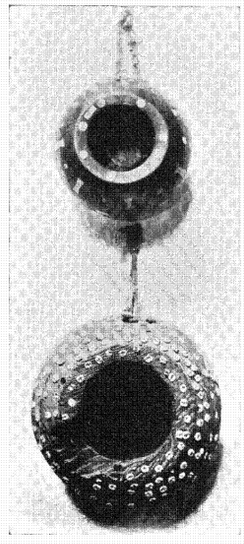

FIG. 12. INLAID IPU AINA IN BISHOP MUSEUM.

A stone idol (Mus. No. 4898) was found in blasting while road making; the blast opening a small cave which was nearly filled by the image; this was secured at once before any possible kahu could intervene. It is well known that a house at Kailua, Hawaii, where Kamehameha died May 8, 1819, was filled with his personal property and made kapu. What became of these kapued things after the cessation of the kapu I do not know, but he left several widows.

3 and 4. Next in the list come the two aumakua or household gods. In these the intricate carving almost rivals the beautiful *rapa* (stern of a war canoe) of the Maori carver, and is sufficiently shown in Plate XVII and Figs. 5-6. The immense mouth and plentiful teeth are usual characteristics of divine images, but the elaborate head dress is by no means common, or on any of these images preserved in museums. What it signifies I do not know, nor are there any natives here who can or will tell. The terminal rod was almost universal and served to support the figure on a pile of stones, on a heap of offerings, or in the ground while prayer was addressed to it. These aumakua are fresh and unsoiled and have evidently been carefully preserved; probably they have never been exposed to the weather. They show no sexual attributes except the absence of mammæ, and it may be noted here that no male figure was found in this cave. The measurements are:—3. Height 26.7 in. from base of feet to top of head dress; from feet to end of rod 15.4 in. This rod has four polyhedral

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concavities (13 sides). 4. Height 27.7 in. from base of feet to top of head dress; from feet to end of rod 16 in. In this the rod is round.[4]

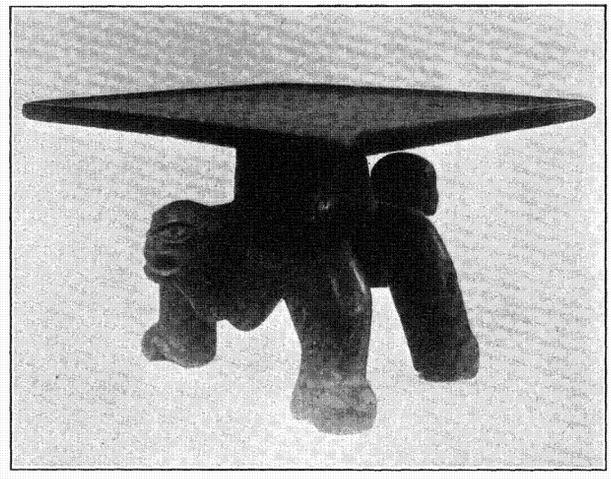

FIG. 13. PAPAMU OR KONANE BOARD.

5. Perhaps the most remarkable carving is the bowl shown in Figs. 7-10. One or two suspended bowls are in the Museum, but their purpose is not well understood and the present example surpasses any Hawaiian carved bowl known in the grotesque originality of the design. The measurements are: Diameter 14×10.6 in. Bowl 4.5 in. deep; rim partly broken away; many (20) fine teeth inserted, often to mark points in the figures; larger one with female parts accentuated; nineteen rectangular holes in back of head, ten of them plugged; three teeth on decayed rim gone.

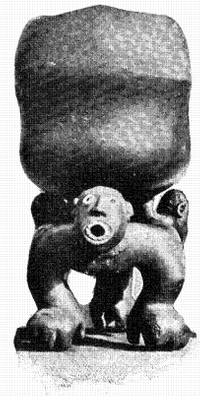

FIG. 14.

I should consider this the most ancient article in the list. It is somewhat decayed and broken, but enough remains perfect to show the great skill as well as imagination of the artist. Apart from the remarkable figures carved on the bowl in the highest relief the attention is caught by the curious method of ornamentation by the insertion of superb human molar teeth. The Hawaiians made great use of the more durable human remains, such as hair, teeth and bones, not only for ornament but for practical purposes. One example of the use we shall see later in this collection; the ornament appears in this and the following bowl. Another curious use of human bones was in

[4] Had these last images been found in less respectable company, I should have doubted their antiquity, although there is little save their fresh appearance to sustain such doubt. But in subject and treatment there is nothing to arouse suspicion.

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the house built at Moanalua, Oahu, of the bleached remains of the men who fell in battle. The use of human bones for fish hooks and arrow points was well known. This disposition of the bones was insulting to the dead and the insult was intentional. This is also shown in the insertion of teeth and bones in vessels of dishonor, such as spittoons (*ipu kuha*), slop basins (*ipu aina*), and the like. Hence the care taken to

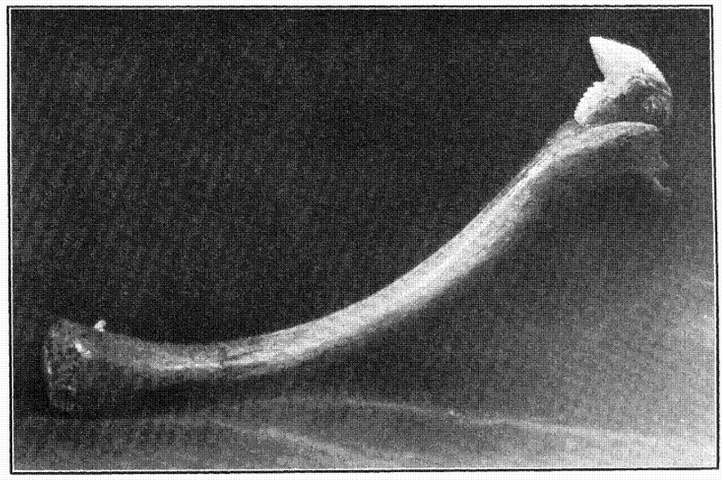

FIG. 15. CARVER WITH HUMAN BONE HANDLE.

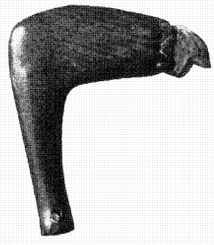

FIG. 16. CARVING TOOL IN BRITISH MUSEUM.

hide from the enemy the bones of a chief or important person. Placed in a food dish, sacred drum or kahili handle the remains were honored, and examples of all these uses are in the Museum.

The bowl itself is of the best form, round, and gracefully curved to the flat rim, while the figures grow out of it without obscuring its form in the least. The teeth, gruesome as they are to our otherwise trained taste, do, it must be confessed, break the monotony of the plain sides in a pleasant way, a device well known to the mediæval jewelers in their gem-studded chalices. The figure in an inverted position (Figs. 7, 9) has her ankles connected by a round bar which serves as a point of suspension, the other end of the suspending cord (aha or coconut braid) being knotted around the neck of the opposite figure which is also female. The

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holes made in the head of this last figure are very neatly cut; the hair and many of the pegs have disappeared. A good bushy wig must have added character to the rather insignificant bald head. Why so much labor should have been expended on a mere ipu aina, a dish to contain the refuse of a feast, such as fish bones or banana peels, is hard to explain, but in the next article of our list we find another ipu aina on which quite as much careful labor has been bestowed. It is of course possible, if not probable, that this figure-handled bowl may have had another if unknown use.

6. As might have been expected in such an assemblage of patrician possessions, there was an inlaid ipu aina. Few of the chiefs entitled to wear feather robes that had not at least one of these convenient trophies of their, or their ancestors', prowess in battle, mementoes of the enemies killed. The one in this collection is shown in Fig. 11, and the dimensions are as follows:—Diameter 10-10.2 in.; height 5.6 in.; teeth 9 on rim, 54 on side, less 4 missing, several half teeth, two decayed; 3 strips of bone; 2 sections of ivory harpoon point from Alaska.

The teeth are all ground down, sometimes showing a section of a root, and while the nerve cavities are large the enamel is remarkably thick. Some of the teeth were decayed, and one has been filled (*post mortem?*) with two narrow pieces of enamel. Some of the teeth are plugged into holes too large. Three strips of bone and two sections of ivory harpoon barbs from the Northwest Coast are added attractions; the harpoon would point to the very early days of the whaling voyages to Bering's Sea when such articles were new to the Hawaiian sailors. It must be remembered that these circular bowls were not turned, but cut with stone tools by the eye alone as guide, and then polished with stones of varying texture.

In the Museum are several of these ipu aina inlaid with bones and teeth, and two of them are shown in Fig. 12. The upper one belonged to Queen Emma's ancestors, and is finished much in the same way as our cave specimen, although with more symmetrical ornamentation. The lower bowl in this illustration was carved from a piece of Oregon pine washed ashore after its long ocean journey, and, as the photograph shows, it is thickly studded with fine molar teeth, a few of them worn down by use in life. It was noted that in the inner portion of the cave where the collection we are describing was found, there were many clean and polished skulls from which all the teeth had been removed.

7. Now we come to a very different class of objects. The game of *Mu* or *Konane* was decidedly an aristocratic game much as chess even among the Egyptians, but I cannot assert that its use was restricted to the alii or chiefs as was the game of *Papa holua* or sledding down hill. It was played on a flat surface marked with points on which were placed black and white stones to serve as "men", the game resembling our draughts or rather the game called fox and geese. Often the flat surface of a natural

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stone was used, the "places" being merely dents pounded in the rock. Many of these are to be seen on the ledges to the north of Kailua on Hawaii. At other times a moderate sized flat stone was selected, as No. 5313 in this Museum. The more elaborate

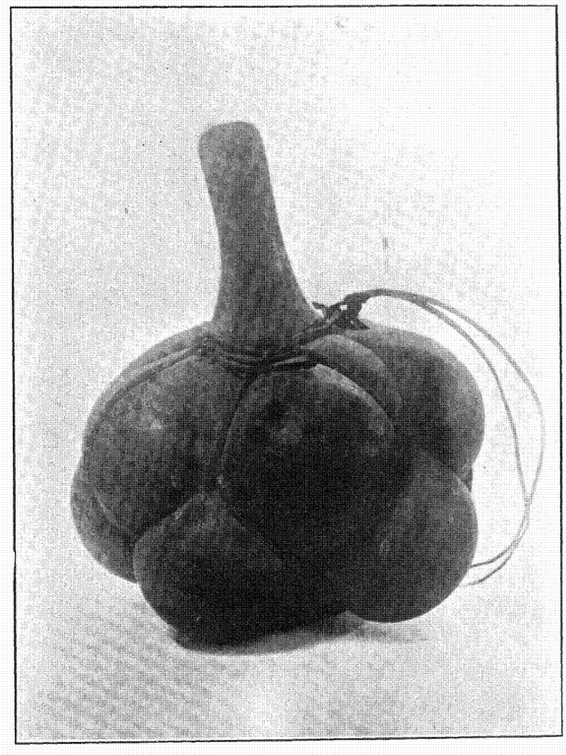

FIG. 17. GOURD WATER BOTTLE, COMPRESSED BY AHA HAWELE.

were of wood on stands, plain or carved, while the places were marked by the insertion of bones (generally chicken). The present example of a wooden papamu or konane board (Fig. 13) is the only one I have seen with carved figures for supports. In the British Museum is a bowl with similar figures (Fig. 14), and other examples are known, but the curious part of this support is the hollow, cylindrical receptacle (for the men?) from which spring the head and fore quarters, the hands becoming the feet of

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the papamu. The general dimensions are: Board 13.2×10.2; 156 holes of minute size, not in equidistant lines, about 1 in. apart; rim raised, top 8 in. from base of feet. Of one of the female (?) figures an arm has been attached by a neat mortise and tenon joint, but is now lost. Eyes were probably inlaid with shell. A coconut braid is provided to hang the papamu up with.

The game of Konane or Mu got its more common name from the *Mu* or officer whose business it was to capture the men needed for sacrifice or the ends of justice,

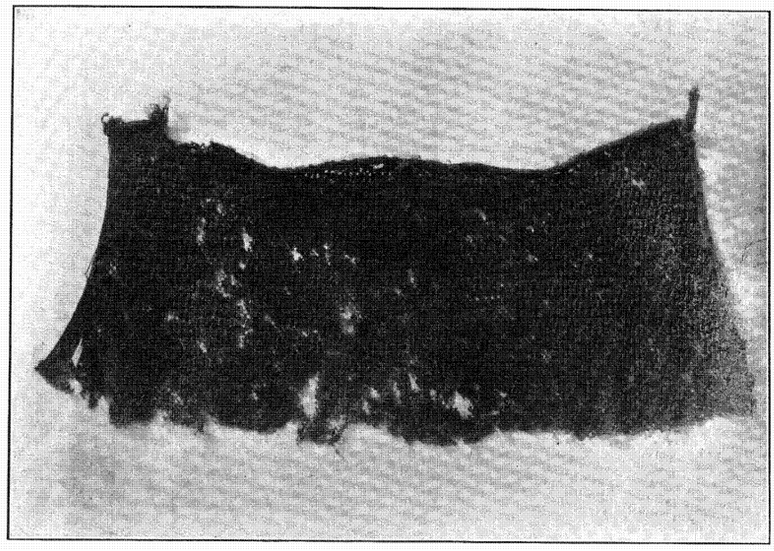

FIG. 18. NET OF FEATHER CAPE.

and the *papamu* means simply the board or flat surface on which the Mu captures his men. The present example of such a board is the smallest I have seen. The places are marked by tiny borings hardly visible, and are in regular rows and not quincuncial as is often the case.

8. With all these carvings was placed a choice example of the tool with which the carving was done (Fig. 15). Generally, however, while the cutter remains the tooth of a shark, the handle is of wood, or, not uncommonly, the jaw bone of a pig. In our specimen the handle is a human clavicle to which the shark tooth is firmly attached by a single wooden peg. The bone is 5.5 in. long, is well shaped for a handle, and has the remains of a waoke cord by which it could be hung up. Half the lower

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jaw of a pig was perhaps a very early form of handle, and the conveniently bent end has been retained in wood, as may be seen in a fine example in the British Museum (Fig. 16). To one who has not tried this tool or seen it used it might appear unsatisfactory, but I have seen it in the hands of old natives as handy a tool as the knife of a Yankee whittler. The best work made with a shark tooth is perhaps the fine diaper pattern on the ceremonial paddles, food scoops, and adze handles of Mangaia, specimens of which are in most large ethnological museums, and which could not be better done with our sharpest chisels. A magnificent example of a Mangaia adze is No. 5939 in this Museum.

FIG. 19. WOODEN FUNNEL.

9. Ipu wai, a gourd water bottle, the only one I have seen of this form, while not a carving is yet a result of plastic art. The Hawaiians understood well the moulding of the growing gourd (of which they had two species indigenous or of ancient introduction) by suspension or compression, and many beautiful specimens of their skill are preserved in the Bishop Museum, but in the bottle before us the compression has been applied by a tight net work around the body of the gourd after it had attained a considerable size. As will be seen in the illustration (Fig. 17), this has resulted in two rows of five bulbous projections each, which give a remarkably attractive appearance to the bottle, which is 11 in. high and 9.8 in. wide. The present cord upon it is of aha or coconut braid, stiff, brittle and doubtless very old. The gourd itself is thin and cracked.

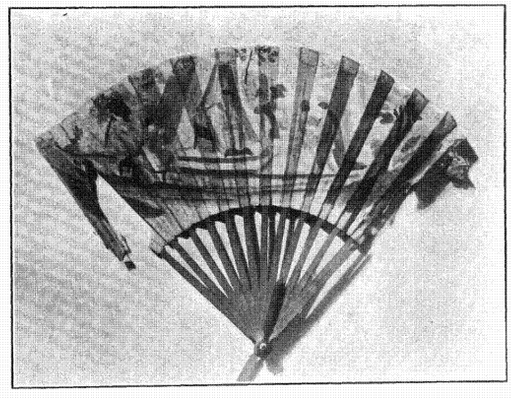

FIG. 20. FOREIGN FAN.

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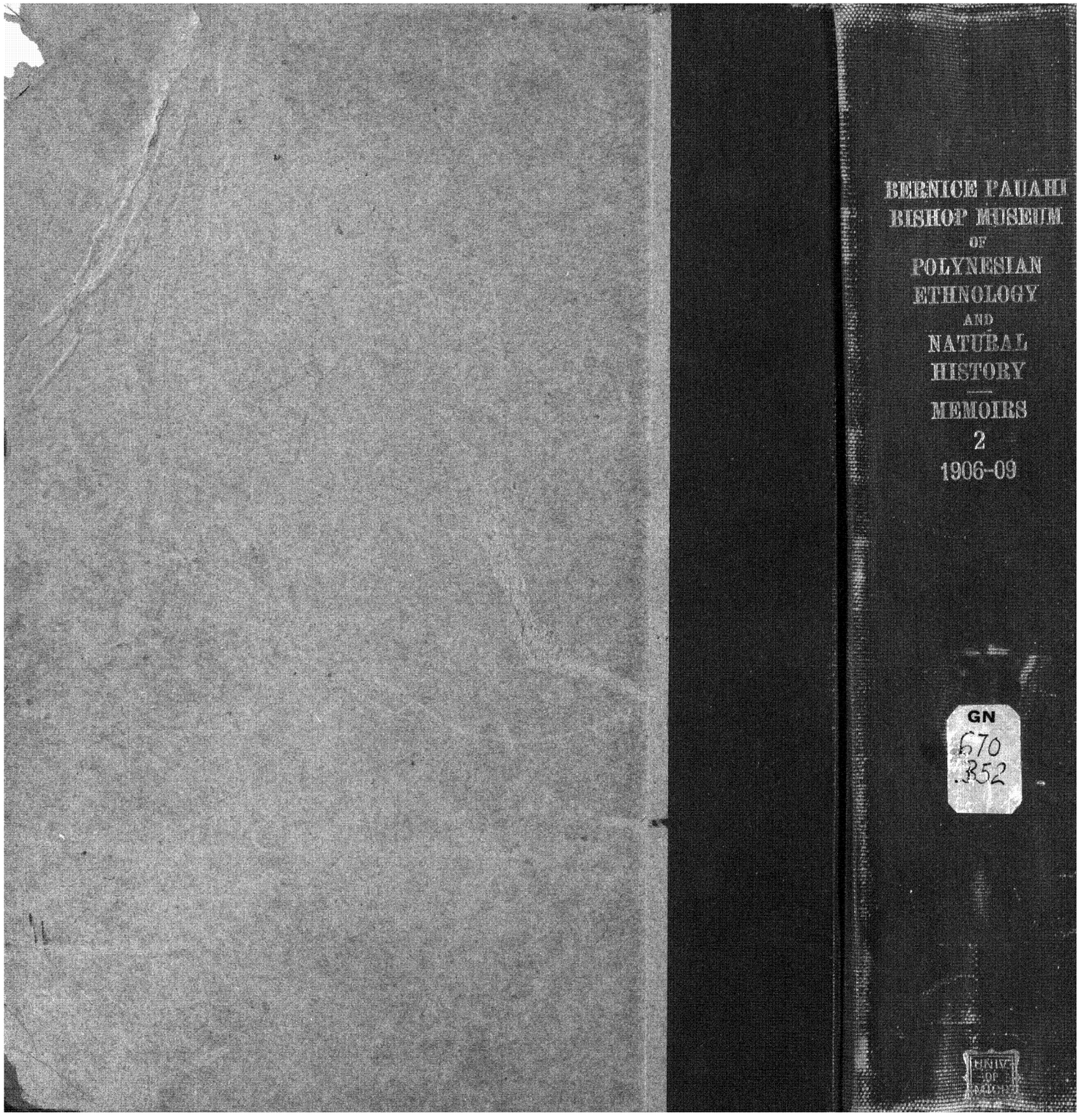

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